

## BOLSHEVIKI, WARTING ON RELIGION, OVERTHROW RUSSIAN CHURCH

## Patriarch and Metropolitan of Petrograd Held as Traitors—Archbishop of Moscow and Other Anti-Soviet Prelates Seized—Priests and Laymen Executed for Opposing the Pillage of Churches by Red Soldiers

Special Correspondence to THE NEW YORK HERALD.  
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ONE year ago Prof. Peter Struve, writing in a Russian newspaper published in Paris, said: "Along the church remains, untouched by Bolshevism and contemptuous of Bolshevism, which cannot injure it." But since then the church, with 30,000,000 members scattered over one-sixth of the land surface of the globe, has felt the mailed fist of Bolshevism in such a manner that to-day there is only the skeleton left, and the skeleton is but a puppet that dances when the Soviet Government pulls the strings.

For five years the Bolsheviks have been hiding the time to strike at the only great organization left in Russia that stood out against communism and atheism. The opportunity came last January, when under pretense of famine relief they dealt the blow which, to an impartial observer, appears to be a fatal one for religion in Russia.

The conflict began when the Government asked Patriarch Tikhon what the church was prepared to give for the famine relief. The Patriarch at once directed the clergy to hand over all material of value which had not been consecrated. This contribution seemed to appease the milder elements in the Government, but the dominating group of anti-clericals insisted that all objects, consecrated as well as unconsecrated, be given up. These extremists had their way, and on February 23 the president of the All-Russian Central Committee decreed that within a month all objects of gold, silver and precious stones must be removed.

The carrying out of these decrees would have involved sacrilege, since by the law of the church consecrated objects cannot be touched by laymen. So the Patriarch reminded the clergy that they would be liable to excommunication if they took part in yielding the consecrated property. The Soviet authorities immediately enforced their decree and applied it to all orders. There was such resistance by the people in some provinces, especially at Shouya, near Vladimir, that the troops were ordered to move. Blood was spilled on both sides. But the Government used the iron hand. Two priests were condemned at Shouya and the public was cowed. Moreover opposition to the seizures was greatly weakened by a violent but skillful press campaign in which the hierarchy was accused of counter-revolutionary tendencies and of plotting toward the starving of the Volga, and, secondly, by the defection of some of the Orthodox clergy, notably Bishop Antonine of Moscow.

Thus the Government was able not only to confiscate the church property, but also to use, with great advantage to itself, the false position in which it placed the church. Priests and laymen who opposed the spoliation of church property were arrested. Some were tried and condemned. Numerous arrests and a few death sentences were reported from the provinces and some of the best known ecclesiastics of Moscow still are in prison. The most sensational trial was that which ended in the sentencing to death of eight priests and three civilians. One of whom was the daughter-in-law of Gen. Brusilov. This severity so alarmed the Soviet Government that in the popular newspapers the death sentence was omitted and an impression conveyed that the accused got only one year's imprisonment. But the *Pravda* and the *Izvestia*, which circulate among the official and educated classes, gave the sentence in full.

## Soviet's Policy Called Distinctly Anti-Church

Referring to the Bolshevik statement that "there has been no attack upon the church" a high and impartial authority writes to me: "This statement is not in accordance with fact. The Soviet Government has from the onset pursued a definitely anti-clerical policy and has never lost an opportunity to hold religion up to ridicule. The latest legislation on the subject of religion is particularly illuminating as showing its attitude in this connection. Clause 121 of the New Criminal Code runs as follows: 'The teaching of religious beliefs in State or private educational establishments and schools to children of tender age and to minors is punishable by forced labor for a period not exceeding one year.'"

According to the same authority the pillaging of the church was quite unnecessary, for if the Soviet Government wanted jewelry to sell it could sell the jewels in the Kremlin. These they exhibited to former Gov. Goodrich of Indiana, when he was here, and he agrees with the Bolsheviks that the total value of these crown jewels does not fall short of one milliard of gold rubles.

The Central Famine Committee, which had called on Tikhon for a contribution to the fund, was satisfied with the offering of unconsecrated objects. But anti-clericals such as Galikin (Gorev) scoffed at the smallness of it. An article appeared in the *Pravda* over Gorev's signature, entitled "The Mountain Brings Forth a Mouse" and this was followed by bitter attacks on the Patriarch in the Government newspapers and on placards

past on the walls. The Bolshevik leaders decided that the church valuables should be contributed not by the church but by the State. The press attacks on the Patriarch became so strong that on February 26 Tikhon wrote to Galikin, the President of the All-Russian Executive Committee, asking that they be stopped. Tikhon also asked that the Central Famine Committee should abide by its original offer, whereby church valuables were to be offered, not forcibly confiscated, checked and then handed over to the famine committee with the consent of the faithful. Finally, Tikhon warned Galikin that in the event of his request being refused he would inform the faithful that he had been misled by the famine committee and even by written documents which he had received from it.

The Patriarch received no reply, and on March 22 he issued a second edict explaining his position and the church's view of the confiscation of consecrated objects. In this edict, as in his first, the Patriarch encouraged the faithful to offer church objects which were not used for divine service, and only protested against the confiscation of vessels, etc., which were so used.

Gold vessels are rare in the Russian churches. Chalice are usually of silver gilt and represent a very insignificant proportion of the total amount of silver in the churches. The famine fund would have lost very little if in its confiscation of ecclesiastical valuables it had accepted ecclesiastical vessels.

A high ecclesiastic who stood at Tikhon's side throughout all this troubled period informed THE NEW YORK HERALD correspondent that the Patriarch had no intention of inciting the faithful to use physical force. On the contrary, the Patriarch always had condemned bloodshed and civil war, and on April 11 in a circular letter to the bishops he consumed every word of opposition to the Government which has had taken place at Shouya, Smolensk, Rostov-on-Don and at Dvornikovo in Moscow, and he enjoined the bishops to dissuade the faithful from the use of violence.

The theologians searched ecclesiastical history for a precedent to the Patriarch's edicts of the civil power, and they found plenty. St. Ambrose of Milan, recognized by the Latin and the Greek churches, refused to obey the order of Valentinian II. to hand over the Slavonic Basilica to the Arians, and the Metropolitan Philip publicly denounced John the Terrible for his savage execution of his son.

The Soviet press grew more violent over the second edict. Tikhon and his priests were accused of greed and avarice, though church valuables had never been used to satisfy the material needs of the clergy. Tikhon was told that he had forgotten the laws of Christ and that he placed gold before human life. Any one who knows how able and invidious Bolshevik propaganda can be will understand how these attacks damaged the prestige of the church. And as there is no press in Russia except the official press, there was no possibility of refuting these calumnies.

**The Bolsheviks See a Plot By the Church for Revolt**

In the meantime the Government was dealing sternly with the clergy opposing confiscation. The chief priest of the Moscow diocese, the Metropolitan Krutitsky-Evseyev, died early in February and the Patriarch appointed Archbishop Nikander as his successor. The Orthodox church in Russia is ruled by bishops through senior priests, who are called "heads of dioceses." A diocese is composed of about twenty parishes. Archbishop Nikander, wishing to acquiesce himself with the condition of religious life in Moscow and to meet his clergy, summoned a conference of the heads of dioceses for February 27. It was after this conference broke up that the confiscation decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee was published, and to consider it Nikander called a conference. It was decided not to resist the Government by force or to encourage the people to do so, but to point out to the faithful the legal way of defending the sacred vessels and to petition the Government to exclude these or to agree to an exchange for unconsecrated objects of equal value and of the same metal.

The Government paid no attention to this offer, but on the other hand made wholesale arrests of the Moscow priests. Among those still in prison are Archbishops Nikander and Seraphim, Bishop Ilarion, almost all the members of the Supreme Church Administration and the Moscow Eparchial Council, as well as many distinguished priests. The explanation of the sudden arrests was that, being determined to confiscate the sacred vessels and fearing opposition from the faithful, the Government decided to remove beforehand those ecclesiastics who might have headed such opposition.

Then the confiscation began. First the church was surrounded by cavalry and infantry. Nobody was allowed inside save the priests and the representatives of the people. At some distance from the churches crowds would collect; and to judge from the cries they were always hostile to the Government representatives, whom they called "atheists, plunderers and oppressors." In some places boys threw sticks and stones at the Red soldiers and then ran away. Spies mixed with the people, noted down those who were most outspoken in their criticism and then denounced them to the police, or sometimes provoked men to criticize and then had them arrested.

Such scenes took place all over Russia, and it seemed as if a new terror was to be loosed. Most of the priests sided with the Patriarch, but a few opposed him and even denounced him in the press. Among these were Antonine, who had been living in retirement in Moscow; Bishop Ebedok of Nizhnovgorod, a group of Petrograd priests led by Father Vedensky and



Bishop Manning.

I HOPE the following article, direct from Moscow, describing the present situation of the church in Russia, will be widely read.

It presents facts which in large part have been skillfully kept from view and as to which a clear understanding is most important.

These facts are of the gravest concern to all Christians of whatever communion in the United States and elsewhere. Trustworthy information, which I have secured from several sources, confirms the statements contained in this article. The Russian Church has had its shortcomings, as this writer recognizes, but it has kept alive a deep faith among its people, and in these days of its fierce trial it has shown its power to produce saints and martyrs. All who have come into contact with the Patriarch Tikhon testify to his noble character, to his spiritual power and to the heroic part he has played in this terrible period. The statement widely cir-

two Moscow priests, Kalinovsky and Borisov.

It must be remembered that the Soviet Government has a fanatical hatred of religion and is very suspicious of the Christian priesthood. According to the Government, all the trouble was caused by the Patriarch and his influential though numerically insignificant group of bishops. These the Bolsheviks contended, forced the lower clergy to inflame the masses.

Representing as it does a party which was a very small minority, and feeling acutely that the great mass of the people regard it with deep distrust, the Soviet power is always haunted by fear of conspiracy and plots. Through its G. P. U. it lashes out blindly, killing right and left, just as Abdul Hamid lashed out more than once through his Kurds at the unfortunate Armenians.

In the eyes of such a government the church's opposition became a widely spread political plot to overthrow the Government. It must be admitted that the action of the Russian emigrants abroad supplies ample food for these suspicions.

The actions and speeches of those bishops and priests who were favorable to the Government in its confiscation policy inspired the Soviet with the hope that internal dissensions would bring down the whole church, and the official press loudly rejoiced at a schism. Meanwhile the Government determined to terrorize the church leaders and to break up the whole ecclesiastical organization.

An appalling impression was made in ecclesiastical and Orthodox circles. Nevertheless not one Russian Christian dared to come forward to ask a pardon. The only ones to beg for a remission were some followers of Tolstoy, several schismatics and a few Jews. Orthodox congregations were the only ones to keep silent. They feared a petition by them would do more harm than good. Persons in close touch with the Government whispered to the faithful that the more they pressed for a pardon the more their insistence would testify to the influence of the condemned men over the masses. As the Government has an intense fear for any adverse influence over the people it is pitiless toward those who wield such influence.

An appeal in Cassation having been refused, the All-Russian Central Committee commuted six of the death sentences. The priests, Zaozerski, Sokolov, Nadejkin and Telepin and the deacon, Tichomirov, were executed.

Death sentences were only pronounced at Shouya, Novgorod and Novosibirsk. In other places the monks and priests were thrown into prison to await trial.

The object of the Government was attained. The priesthood was terrorized. The average "church member" remained silent, paralyzed with fear. Some bishops and priests even came forward to bless a cynical and godless Government and to start "reforming" and "revivifying" the church.

## Christianity in Russia Is Fast Losing Ground

The Bolsheviks certainly have been victorious in the first serious encounter with what was the greatest organized force in Russia. They have failed in many things, even in the main task of establishing Communism. But they have succeeded marvelously well in creating an anti-religious atmosphere in this country, which, five years ago, was intensely religious, not to say superstitious.

Russian orthodox soldiers have plundered churches at the bidding of a Government consisting wholly of atheists and anti-clericals. They have thrown into sacks the chalices to which ten years ago they attributed supernatural powers. They have tied up priests whom they looked upon, ten years ago, as wonder workers, able to blast them with a curse. They have shot down fellow Christians for attempting to defend the churches; and lastly they have executed priests.

Let us consider the religious conduct of the people. Despite the many statements that have been made in America about a religious revival in Russia one will find no trace of any such revival, but, very clear proofs that Christianity is fast losing ground. People hardly ever cross themselves in the street, and those that know pre-war Russia will realize what a tremendous change this is. Moreover, few of the male sex go to church, in the towns at least; and the obligation to confess and receive the sacrament once a year is no longer, of course, enforced by the State, as it once was.

In the case of students, officers, soldiers and Government servants, the Government servant who exhibits devotion to religion is unlikely to get on.

The Bolshevik Government for the last five years has carried on an anti-Christian propaganda by word of mouth as well as by press. No religious books are printed. The White Russians are as flabby on the sub-

ject of their religion as they are on every other subject save drinking, dancing and playing. They would perhaps accept, Slavonic Bibles presented to them by pious Americans, but they would never pay for them and never read them. Hence the assertion that Slavonic Christianity is losing ground very fast in Russia. As the teaching of religion is prohibited in all public and private schools, and a sentence of one year at hard labor is imposed for each breach of this regulation, the new generation probably will grow up without any religion. In forty years Russia will thus have gone much further in the direction of agnosticism than western Europe has gone in 400 years.

The orthodox in Moscow were formerly free from any feeling of self-consciousness or human respect in the public exercise of their religion. In that they were like Mohammedans, who, in their own countries, pray as openly as if there were nobody in the world save Allah and themselves. Certainly there was nothing like that in the other hand. It did not interfere with the wheel of traffic.

The remaining twenty-four shrines will soon be pulled down. One of them, a huge church tower standing in Great Nikitskaya street, near the headquarters of the A. R. A. has already been surrounded with the fatal wooden fence behind which the work of demolition will rapidly be accomplished. It is surprising, indeed, how rapidly the Bolsheviks accomplish any work of destruction and destruction to which they put their hands and how

This is nearly all gone. When a tram passes the Iversky gate, you can see a couple of old women crossing themselves furtively in a corner. I am told, however, that there is a great revival of devotion among the young ladies and gentlemen of the "intellectual" classes who formerly looked on their national church with

## FOREWORD

by

THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM T. MANNING, D. D., BISHOP OF NEW YORK.

culated that he has abdicated his office should deceive no one. The truth is that he is, indeed, held in prison, shamefully misrepresented and deprived by the Government of all opportunity to exercise his office. Few men in any age have borne such witness for Christ as this faithful Bishop, who for years lived here in America and is known to many among us.

A church which can show such fruits as these deserves the prayers and help of Christendom, and their ancient church is the one strong force for religion among the Russian people.

An assault upon it is now being made, however, far more insidious than the open persecution which it has already endured. An organization has been formed which bears the name of the "Living Church" and which is heralded as the Reformed Church of Russia. This organization, your correspondent states, has drawn to its service certain renegade bishops and priests; it is proposing to take the ancient church into its own hands and use

it for its own purposes; it is under the complete control and direction of "a most anti-Christian and atheistic Government which has never lost an opportunity of harrying religion," and the real object of it is to destroy the Russian Church by the process known as "boring from within."

If this impious plot is to succeed, if the Soviet Government is to accomplish its avowed purpose to destroy religion, if through force and fraud the Russian Church itself is to be subverted, and if, in consequence, the masses of the Russian people are to pass, in the words of De Maistre quoted by your correspondent, "from superstition into atheism," the result will be one with which the whole world will have to reckon.

One fact this article should help us to keep in view and that is that Bolshevism is the declared enemy of Jesus Christ, and that the triumph of Bolshevism would mean, and is intended to mean, the destruction of religion, of morality and of Christian civilization.

one can well imagine. But outside the Kremlin the Soviet Government is beginning to demolish no less than twenty-five street shrines, containing holy icons, with lamps burning day and night before them. The largest of these was in Moses Square, near the end of Tverskaya street. A month ago it was surrounded with a wooden fence, as the czar's house at Elaginburg was surrounded from the public gaze, and behind this fence the sledge hammers of Communist workmen smashed altar stones and icons, crucifixes and carved texts of scripture. When I left Moscow a few days ago this beautiful shrine had completely disappeared. It was larger than the stone cross at Charing Cross station, London, and, being situated in the middle of a very wide and busy thoroughfare, infested by furious motor cars, it was a great help to foot passengers crossing the street, permitting them as it did to take breath for a moment in a place of safety before attempting the rest of their journey.

On the other hand it did not interfere with the wheel of traffic. The remaining twenty-four shrines will soon be pulled down. One of them, a huge church tower standing in Great Nikitskaya street, near the headquarters of the A. R. A. has already been surrounded with the fatal wooden fence behind which the work of demolition will rapidly be accomplished. It is surprising, indeed, how rapidly the Bolsheviks accomplish any work of destruction and destruction to which they put their hands and how

slow they are at any work of reparation or reconstruction. They have been tinkering for months past at the former German Consulate and at a great number of other slightly damaged houses, which an English or American building contractor could make habitable in a few weeks, but winter will probably catch them with this task uncompleted, so that they may have to begin it all over again next spring; but when it comes to battering down a beautiful religious shrine they can do it in a few days. In the same way it only took them a couple of years to shatter the whole economic structure of Russia, but at their present rate of progress it will take them a century to rebuild that structure.

One would not expect to find the same iconoclastic spirit in the country districts; but it is to be feared that many of the Muzhiks are allowing shrines and even churches to fall into decay, since they are no longer compelled or persuaded by law, by custom or by ecclesiastical exhortations to keep them in repair.

Non-Christian tribes and non-Orthodox communities are everywhere encouraged by the local Soviets to pull down or appropriate Orthodox emblems and shrines erected, and in this way an enormous number of such emblems and shrines have disappeared or changed hands.

The monasteries and nunneries will almost certainly be confiscated next year, probably to be used as hospitals, schools, barracks and Government institutions. What is going on under our eyes, but without exciting any particular attention on the part of the press, is a stupendous ecclesiastical decay not less extensive or significant than the subversion of the Eastern Church in Asia Minor and northern Africa under the attacks of the medieval Mohammedans. . . . One night a few weeks ago I sat at a window of the former Hotel Astoria (now the Bolshevik headquarters), in St. Isaac's Square, Petrograd, and looked out at the mighty church after which the square is named. Noticing the direction of my glance, one of the commissars, cursed and said to me with a smile: "It seems solid, doesn't it? But all the architects who have recently examined it assure us that the foundations are giving way. For it is built, as you know, on piles driven into a swamp. It is already out of perpendicular. It is doomed. It may last ten, twenty years; but nothing can save it."

The Moscow Bolsheviks complain that sometimes even the Communist newspapers in the provinces are too best of all, from the Bolshevik point of view, religion and the practical hold on the young men and women who were 10 years old when the great war began and are now 15, and religious prejudices, anti-Semitic or otherwise, also have no hold. This can never be said of the middle aged or the elderly, who, even when working with the Bolsheviks, betray at times a sense of revolt of Jews or a hesitancy, aristocratic contempt for what they used to call "the lower classes."

Trotsky for the last five years has paid the greatest attention to the R. K. S. M.—perhaps it was because that there alone he found complete frankness, enthusiasm and self-abandonment, with absolutely neither racial nor other prejudices, and a manhood of conviction that if the members of that organization who are now 17 reach the age of 30 under a Bolshevik Government, then Communism will have taken root in Russia as strongly and unerringly as Christianity had taken root in the Roman Empire in the time of Julian the Apostate. Even if a counter-revolution and a monarchist restoration take place after that it will not matter; the Soviet Government will come again, the roots will remain hidden in the earth, though the leaves may be destroyed. For the next ten years, however, this delicate plant, the R. K. S. M., must be carefully watched, and to do this, Trotsky is tending it with his own hands.

Trotsky began with a rather unhappy metaphor. "Religion," said he, "is a mustard plaster—it sticks." But, correcting himself immediately, he began again: "Religion is a poison, particularly in revolutionary times or in the times of exceptional difficulty which come after the conquest of power. Therefore we ought to deepen the revolutionary knowledge of the young and take into account their religious superstitions. The more enlightened should approach the less enlightened with the very greatest pedagogical attention. We ought to carry on among them a propaganda of atheism, if only that propaganda defined man's place in the universe and outlined the circle of his activities here on earth."

## Destroying the Shrines And Seizing Monasteries

True, that innumerable crosses still glitter over the towers and spires of the Kremlin, greatly to the delight of American visitors, who are inclined to favor Bolshevism. "Why, they haven't removed a single one of their religious emblems," said Mr. Bloomfield, a Boston lawyer, when I met him in the Kremlin some weeks ago, "that shows them to be quite free from religious prejudices. They tell me that they are going to preserve the Kremlin as a great historical museum and will not interfere with a single crucifix or church or shrine or icon or pious inscription. Now that is exactly as it should be."

As a matter of fact, the retention of the multitudinous crosses of the Kremlin does more harm than good to Christianity, for it associates the religion of Christ with the bloodstained old czarist system, which was about as far removed from Christianity as

## Bolshevist Bishop and Renegade Priests Now Control Religious Destinies of Scores of Millions—Government, Openly Preaching Atheism, Forbids Religious Instruction, Destroys Shrines, Terrorizes Faithful

slow they are at any work of reparation or reconstruction. They have been tinkering for months past at the former German Consulate and at a great number of other slightly damaged houses, which an English or American building contractor could make habitable in a few weeks, but winter will probably catch them with this task uncompleted, so that they may have to begin it all over again next spring; but when it comes to battering down a beautiful religious shrine they can do it in a few days. In the same way it only took them a couple of years to shatter the whole economic structure of Russia, but at their present rate of progress it will take them a century to rebuild that structure.

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## Persecution Cleansed Church And the Reds Were Alarmed

In the first year of its existence the Communist Government of Russia looked on religion with contempt and underestimated its force. It thought that if it deprived the church of its material resources and carried on a few religious discussions in public the roots which Eastern Christianity had fixed in the soul of the Russian people would quickly die. A great Russian ecclesiastic informs THE NEW YORK HERALD correspondent that "agents have proved the Government to have been wrong in this estimate. Religion in Russia was cleansed and strengthened by persecution and repression. The Government suddenly became aware that the church was stronger and more organized when it began to take away the church's possessions, so it decided either to destroy the church or to bring it into subjection."

During the trial of the fifty-four one frequently heard the president of the court and the accusers speaking of the ecclesiastical hierarchy's existence as "illegitimate." This official language had the same meaning into the desired separating church and state. "The very fact of the archbishops having met together at Bishop Ni-



Above the window in the center of this picture, which shows a building in Red Square, Moscow, is the Soviet slogan, "Religion Is the Opium of the People."

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